

**Director's Forum Minutes**  
**State Laboratory Institute**  
**2:45 pm – 3:15 pm / May 23, 2006 / Room 202**

**Attendees:** Paul Elvin, John Fontana, Linda Han, Raimond Konomi, Julianne Nassif, Kathleen Nawn, Joseph Peppe, Charles Salemi, Xingtai Wang, Barbara Werner, Peter Belanger, Alan Borne, Austin Nagle, Alexander Sloutsky, Sandra Smole, Marcia Stowell.

**Excused:** Cheryl Gauthier, Garry Greer, Dina Caloggero, Sally Cheney, Mariah Grazioplene, Harvey George

**Chair:** Alfred DeMaria

**Minutes:** Austin Nagle

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**UMASS Lowell Public Health Laboratory Certificate Program (M. Stowell)**

Prior to Dr. DeMaria's arrival M. Stowell provided an update on the UMASS Lowell Public Health Laboratory Certificate Program. M. Stowell discussed how the program is on track and asked for feedback on how to advertise for students. Several suggestions came forth to advertise this program through news letters from groups such as the Mass Public Health Association, The Local Public Health Institute of Mass, etc. B. Werner also suggested that we contact Julie Sullivan for help finding prospective students.

**General Business (A. DeMaria)**

Within the 750K health care reform budget there is approximately 120K to provide hepatitis C testing for community health centers. This will be a joint venture with UMASS. It is honored that UMASS will provide help with getting this project started, and will hire a tech and provide billing services for us.

**Environmental Chemistry (J. Nassif)**

The CT lab has been very busy the last few weeks with several emergency preparedness activities.

- The CT laboratory participated in a Level One surge capacity drill which simulated a chemical event in Augusta, ME with probable Lewisite exposure. Since there is no validated Lewisite method, the lab received urine samples for total arsenic analysis because arsenic is a major component of Lewisite. The drill was a great learning experience identifying multiple opportunities for improving the pre-analytical and analytical processes.
- "Pop proficiency test" urine samples arrived today and will be analyzed for 12 elements in the trace metals panel.
- The laboratory initiated a drill today with 5 local hospitals to assess their communication and sample collection (simulated samples), packaging and shipping skills. The drill will also evaluate the specimen transport courier system.

**Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (J. Nassif)**

Shellfish beds from the New Hampshire border to Duxbury, the Outer Cape and the southern coasts of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket are closed due to elevated level in toxin in mollusks harvested there. Much of the same area is also closed due to excessive rainfall resulting in elevated bacterial counts. The laboratory did detect toxin (screening kit & confirmatory bioassay) in a market sample of soft shell clams from the North Shore which necessitated product recall.

The laboratory has noticed an unacceptably high rate of inconclusive results associated with the Rapid Screen from Gilet Biosystems this season. The current lot has a sticker on it indicating that the expiration date had been extended. Last week, the lab requested a new lot of kits be shipped immediately. Miscommunication within the company resulted in the kits not being shipped, however, they were sent today.

The Environmental and Food Bacteriology laboratories are working closely with the DPH Food Protection Program on issues related to sampling, analysis and policy.

**Virology Laboratories (R. Konomi)**

The Virology Laboratory has received samples for mumps virus testing from 70 patients. No virus isolation so far. 15 serum samples have been tested for mumps virus and two of those were IgM positive.

By CDC request, the SARS testing reagents will be destroyed or returned. All LRN and public health laboratories should return the ELISA reagents and destroy the primers and probes for PCR testing. We plan to mail today the EIA reagents to CDC.

In order to address all the health concerns from the virus isolation staff regarding the BSL 3 area, an appointment with an occupational health physician has been scheduled for June 2.

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